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TAKING OUT THE TRASH

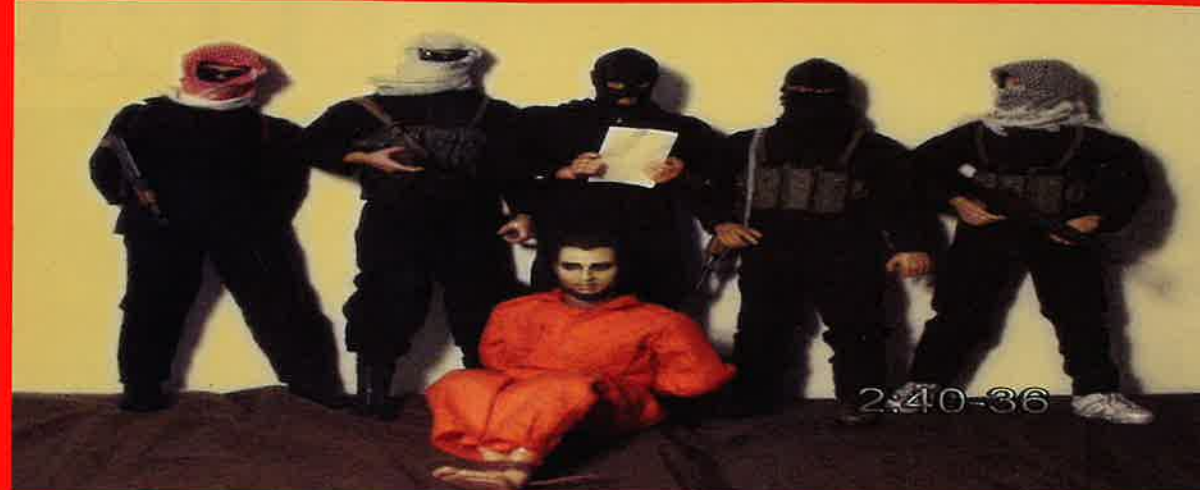
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The Fine Art of Body Disposal

David S. Duncan

-Murder, in its rawest form, is an experience that most people will never, thankfully, participate in. But isn't it only natural that our inborn, human curiosity overcomes our natural aversion to sudden death?

And yet we deal daily with death. To live is, in essence, to die. Perhaps in our curiosity we are attempting to, in our own mortal way, grapple with that black-robed man, and through knowledge gain an understanding of the unknowable.

In murder, the overwhelming majority of victims know their dispatcher, through acquaintances or blood. In such cases body disposal becomes paramount. No body; no crime.

Bodies are hard to hide. They smell, they float, they're heavy and awkward and they're hard to handle. Burning, boiling and dismembering bodies seem to do no good. They refuse to cooperate or accommodate.

Murders today are as common as they ever were. In-home arguments, a spouse practicing indoor target practice or robberies gone wrong, all constantly add to the toll.

Newspapers report a constant string of murders, and are even themselves used to wrap up the bloody bits in preparation for a nocturnal body disposal run.

Even as I write, it has been reported that a brother and sister in Indiana murdered their grandmother and mother, dismembered their bodies (apparently for ease of transport), took the parts to grandpa's house, bludgeoned the old man to death and buried the assorted parts in the basement. Apparently spectacular murder and idiocy walk hand in hand. The only bright light in that sorry episode is that they at least left grandpa intact.

Either they completely panicked, one murder leading to the next, or they're just ruthless killers. Luckily

for the poor cops that had to dig up the bodies, that question will be left for the courts to decide. In court often the only witness is the victim, and in our modern age, dead men, or in that case, dead family members, do tell tales.

Even geniuses can be idiots. Harvard Professor Dr. John Webster, after his own unsuccessful dismemberment/burial attempt, summed up his view of those pesky bodies when he stated, "I saw nothing but the alternative of successful removal and concealment of the body, on one hand, and of infamy and destruction on the other."



Body of dismembered man hidden in a bag

Perhaps a Harvard education is not all it is cracked up to be and efficient body disposal was not part of the curriculum.

Charles Dickens, when visiting that Ivy League bastion of learning was asked what landmarks he would be interested in visiting. Characteristically, human curiosity won out, and Dickens asked to be shown the room where Dr. George Parkman—Webster's victim—was murdered.

The decision to dispose of the human body carries with it a steep price. Murder is a social crime and societies guard their members jealously. Once the decision to dispose of a body is reached, all pleas of self-defense or accidental death become untenable, almost laughably unbelievable. Illegal body disposal is

a crime almost guaranteed to earn the offender sufficient time behind bars.

Murder is murder and a corpse is unwelcome company. The killing is not the hard part; a whack on the head, a bullet through the heart. No. The difficult part is the disposal of the body, that point at which even a Harvard professor can come to grief, the part that goes hand in hand with murder and at which even the most cunning killer is at his most vulnerable. Body disposal is a fine art, and with that, we ask that you please accept this treatise called "The Fine Art of Body Disposal."

The easiest method of body disposal is no disposal at all. An extreme example is John Wayne Gacy.

Mr. Gacy, being a bit of a carpenter and an accomplished gravedigger, fashioned a trapdoor leading to the crawlspace under his house, into which he simply dragged and buried his 33 victims. With no bloody dismemberments, the house remained tidy, bodies were out of sight and no midnight body disposal runs were required. A simple system and one that worked remarkably well. A simple system, yes, but one that virtually begs for the electric chair upon discovery, a ritual most murderers would rather not go through.

For those wanting to avoid such a fate, placing rocks in the victim's pockets and dumping the body in the local waterway has some appeal. No body; no crime; no harm, no foul. But a watery grave is not always a cooperative one; bodies in water are called "floaters" for a reason.

Some dispatchers realize that bodies float and slash the abdomen of the corpse in hopes that the evidence of their crime will remain undisturbed, peacefully resting on the bottom, out of sight of those curious human eyes.

Pictures of victims of the recent tsunami show the bloating effect of bacterial decomposition in their swollen bellies, almost like a balloon. So, poke a hole in that balloon, the abdomen, and it won't float. Fortunately for the victims, things don't work out that way. It is not just the belly that swells, the entire body expands, though not to such a great degree as the abdomen, and most bodies eventually do float. All slashing the belly does is point to a definite murder, one that may have been simply passed off as a drowning otherwise.



A bloated body floating in a swamp

"Concrete overshoes" as a mechanism of murder works fairly well, but fails at that difficult task of body disposal. Again, murder is only half the task. As a human body decays the skin sloughs off, the body breaks free and another floater is born. Now two crime scenes are created, one with skin and a perfect cast of the victim's feet laying on the bottom and a corpse floating on top screaming for attention.

The recent Scott Peterson fiasco is a case in point. According to the prosecution, Peterson weighed down his pregnant wife with homemade concrete blocks and tossed her in the bay. Once his wife's skin sloughed off, the bonds loosened, the body floated free and a crime scene emerged. An unusual disappearance was transformed into unquestionable murder. If the prosecution is correct, somewhere in the depths of the bay another crime scene exists; lonely concrete blocks, rope and bits of skin. Like the Harvard professor, another failed body disposal.

Unlike Peterson, the "Educated Murderer," Edward Rulloff, managed to formulate a successful mother/child underwater disposal in Lake Cayuga, Mich.

When condemned to death for

another murder, and apparently having nothing to lose, Rulloff confessed to his attorney that he "wrapped their bodies with 'untempered steel wire that would never become unfastened' attached a heavy mortar to the body of his wife, a flatiron to that of his child" and dumped their bodies in the lake. The "Educated Murderer," unlike Peterson, knew to make allowances for decay of the dearly departed and wrapped the bodies accordingly.

Not every crime scene has a handy body of water nearby and often the ever popular burial method

If a body is buried, decomposition is slowed by as much as eight times. Two weeks above ground becomes sixteen weeks below. Four months for identification is a lot longer than two weeks and the hurried burials provided a little breathing room in the rush for identification.

By the same token, by burying the murder victim, or wrapping in sheets or plastic, the murderer is granting the authorities an extension in time for discovery and identification. Since illicit body disposal is, by its very definition, intended to be permanent, the longer the body hangs around, the greater the opportunity for discovery. The deeper the body, or more airtight the covering, the greater the preservative effect. A body at the standard six feet takes an amazing ten to twelve years to turn to skeleton and contrary to popular belief, there are few worms at two feet, much less six.

As an example, Dr. William R. Maples of Gainesville, Fla., once related that, in finding the body of a young child "wrapped up in textiles, enclosed in a plastic bag, shut up in a vinyl suitcase and buried in sandy soil for 10 years (and appeared as) a fresh body buried only a few weeks earlier."

Most bodies aren't suitcase-sized and transport becomes a problem, as perhaps it did for the upstanding citizens of Indiana previously mentioned. That brings us to a widely employed and highly acclaimed method of body disposal—dismemberment.

During questioning in Canada about a particularly brutal case, dismemberment specialist Dr. Steve Symes was asked " (w)ould cutting up a body with a circular saw make a mess?" Needless to say, the answer was in the affirmative.

That's the problem with unwanted bodies; they bleed, they're hard to handle and when you try to break them down into manageable



Many victims of the recent Asian tsunami were left to decompose outdoors, which many feared would lead to widespread disease.

pieces they selfishly leave an unsightly mess. It's as if their previous owner had purposefully decided to make life hard for the poor aspiring body disposal expert, as if things weren't bad enough already.

Often the first sign that a crime has occurred—perhaps the only sign if the body disposal was successful—is blood. Just look at our youthful Indiana duo. Bodies safely out of sight and what do they do? Apparently they decided to drive around town sporting bloody articles throughout the car for a few days. Successful dismemberment, transport and burial, all wasted. However, it's doubtful they would have gotten away with it in the long run; the neighbors saw them carrying bags of cement, renting a jackhammer and driving the victims' car. But still, idiocy is idiocy. In addition, they perfectly preserved the crime scene under five inches of concrete, right at home. Obviously a couple of budding Gacys. But, sometimes, everything can go according to plan and still go wrong.

Perhaps the king of dismemberment is Richard "Woodchipper" Crafts, a singular master of the craft. No puny circular saws for him. His tools of choice? A chain saw and a full size wood chipper. Dr. Symes informed us that dismemberment is a messy business with a "puny" circular saw. Imagine how much worse a full size wood chipper would be. But in his own twisted way, Crafts was brilliant, and he almost pulled it off.

To avoid the horrendous mess of dismemberment, Crafts hit upon an evilly ingenious solution; freeze the body.



Body parts found in a human-size refrigerator

The day before separating his wife's soul from her body, in a literal as well as a figurative sense, Crafts bought a human-sized freezer. The very day of the murder he rented the aforementioned wood chipper and the relatively simple task of

murder and freezing of the body was accomplished without incident. Crafts then pointed the wood chipper toward the river, fired up the chain-saw and proceeded to cut his wife into branch sized chunks. When the coast was clear, he cranked up the massive machinery, fed it the freshly carved body parts and watched as the shredded remains of his wife were flung far and wide across the waters of the Housatonic River. Perhaps he even cackled, as one might expect any evil genius. Was he a genius, though? Not quite. A mess is a mess. Just because it was frozen, didn't mean it wasn't there.



Chopped leftovers of a Mexican serial killer's wrath. (Where the actual

Small parts fly in any dismemberment and his was no exception. Three ounces of flesh, two teeth, a finger and 59 pieces of bone landed on the riverside. In this day of modern forensics, it was a nice try, but doomed to failure.

Matt "Trashcan" Rogers can in no way be compared to Crafts. His method was sloppy, the results laughable and within days of the evil deed he was predictably incarcerated.

Rogers, in the time honored tradition of unilateral divorce, gently rearranged the bones surrounding his wife's brain and as an afterthought, stuffed her in his trunk. A quick run to the local swimming hole, a hasty burial, anything but just leave her in the trunk. Yet that's what he did.

Eventually, tired of transporting his beloved wife about town, our bright light of Tennessee decided to burn the bones, which were, by the time he reached that brilliant decision, all that remained. Bad choice; he should have scattered the bones and burnt the car. But, who are we to second guess the actions of a killer? We are merely the curious watching this train-wreck of murder unfold before our eyes.

Throughout rural America, hunting is a favorite pastime. We bring the game home, dress it out and then somehow dispose of the internal organs, hide, hooves and bone. Most people use a 50-gallon drum with holes punched in the bottom as an improvised incinerator for burning trash and assorted animal parts. Burying the remains is too much work, if you don't go deep enough your dogs, or the neighbors, will drag discarded body parts across the lawn and under the porch. And by neighbors, I mean the actual neighbors themselves. There's nothing funnier than watching the neighbor's barefoot three-year-old kid dragging a handful of deer guts across a dirt road to show momma—hilarious. Have that happen once or twice and the neighbors will supply you with your very own 50-gallon drum, complete with holes. (Where the actual

drums come from I have no idea.)

Rogers had already shown he wasn't the sharpest tool in the shed and in his half-hearted attempt at burning his wife's remains he proved it once again. He burned the body just enough to remove the remaining flesh. The human leg bone he left sticking up out of the drum apparently didn't faze him in the least. To Rogers, a bone was a bone. When the local police department stopped by for a visit "Trashcan" swore that the obviously human femur was the leg bone of a goat.

The moral of this story? If you're gonna be dumb, you better be tough and if you're gonna burn bones, finish the job. Such sloppiness reflects poorly on practitioners of the Fine Art.

Disposing of the trash is one thing, burning an entire house is another matter. When a house burns the attention paid is often immediate and detailed. The killer would be hard pressed to fashion a more spectacular way of drawing attention to the very body he's attempting to conceal.

In Hollywood, the fire investigator, without hesitation, walks to where the fire started, declares a desired spot the point of origin,

points burn marks on the wall and labels the fire arson. If only Hollywood were real life. It's when the origin of a fire cannot be determined that arson is suspected. Perhaps the origin cannot be determined because there are no walls to point to. If the victim's a crispy critter, the walls are gone and the copper wires melted, it's arson. Such highly destructive temperatures are a sure sign an accelerant was used, usually, but not always, gasoline. House fires don't burn that hot without help. Fires in the home, on average, burn for about two hours at a sustained temperature of, at most, 1,500 degrees Fahrenheit. Crematoriums burn bodies at 1,800 degrees and copper melts at 2,200. Even at 2,200 degrees it takes a long time to melt copper. Imagine your house stove on its hottest setting. It takes that much heat and more, in addition to heat of the average house fire, to melt that metal.



The body of a victim burned in car crash.

When a house burns with victims inside, firefighters expect to find them in the "pugilistic pose" with plenty of meat on the bone. The victim usually dies due to smoke inhalation, not the fire itself. After death, if the fire burns long enough to reach the body, muscles tighten up and contract, drawing the victim's knees up toward the chest and while positioning the hands out front in the classic boxer's pose. Investigators often look for the forearms and knees of the newly departed protruding from the ashes. If a burned body is found with its arms behind the back, its usually an indication that the body was tied up in some manner before the fire was set. Some murderers go small and some go all out. Patrick Mahon was one of the small ones.

Mahon of Eastbourne, England, was one of our aspiring dismemberment specialists, he failed miserably. He boiled and burned body parts, cast pieces along the railroad and made a bigger mess of an already messy task. When captured he admitted to a cell mate that he had burned parts of his mistress in the kitchen stove. Stupid move, but jailhouse snitches are unreliable and such information offered is never necessarily fatal to one's case.

What sets Mahon's jailhouse confession apart from the others, and which laid such weight upon the words of the convict snitch, was in the small details. As related by the informant, "the intense heat...caused the eyes to open, which so terrified Mahon that he ...rushed from the house." The muscles of the eyelids



The aftermath of a suicide bomber (exploded before target)

had contracted. A small variation on the pugilistic pose, but one that, in the telling, clearly showed that Mahon was present when the head of his mistress was set to the torch. One can imagine Mahon sitting there, watching his problems disappear in the heat of a cleansing fire, only to be suddenly

Contracted eyelids leave a condemning stare. faced with the accusatory stare of his loved one. Boiling had failed and burning had created a nightmare. No wonder he turned to train-bound nocturnal meat distribution. Like our

Indiana killers, he too was found in possession of bloody articles rather than actual body parts. Idiocy respects no borders and the Fine Art will allow not even the smallest mistake. But when idiots go big, the results are spectacular.

Take your common house fire. Add a little gasoline, dismemberment by bomb, a gunshot, a dog or two and you have a hell of a story. Stephen "Dynamite" Williams was by no means an intelligent man, but the mess he created rivaled that of "Woodchipper" Crafts.

Dynamite? An excellent idea! Blow the body to Kingdom Come and you're released from the manual labor of body disposal. No tedious hacking, chopping or sawing involved. An exciting way to avoid the tedium of a boring job. Doesn't

work; bombing ignores the mess principle.

True, the body might not appear to be there, but in reality it's everywhere. Once the deed's done it's impossible to clean up. And if you cheap out, as Williams did, by not employing enough of the explosive, you end up with a bloody mess in addition to big chunks of body parts strewn throughout the area. By blowing up his victim, Williams broke one of the cardinal rules of the Fine Art. Body disposal is to be kept quiet and undetected. By setting off that blast he might have well of held up a sign saying "Look Over Here."

Williams, having been hired to help a neighbor remodel a house, found himself coveting his employer's goods. Rather than continue his work and thereby acquire his own, Williams, as the lazy will do, decided upon the ancient technique of acquisition, murder. A quick bullet to the heart and the deed was done. As we know, murder's easy, body disposal is not.

The house was isolated and the gunshot passed unnoticed by the neighbors. Williams then embarked upon one of the laziest, and most spectacular, attempts at body disposal imaginable.

Williams first attempted to enlist a friend's help. Enlisting a friend's help is not all that unusual and time after time killers are brought to justice by the very help enlisted. Most friends are enlisted for moral support or for help to move the bulky body to the nearest woods or stream. Williams needed no moral support and the actual physical movement of the body held no appeal for a man as lazy as he. No, he simply wanted to borrow the neighbor's dog to eat the body. How Williams expected a fifty pound dog to eat a full grown man is unexplained. Unlike his master, the dog refused to participate, and Williams' first foray into the practice of the Fine Art died on the drawing board.

The option of dragging the body into the woods was still available, but laziness reared its ugly head and Williams opted for the easy appeal of dynamite dismemberment. The fuse was lit and our perpetrator awaited the results of his "brilliant" idea. The result? A simple murder scene with a portable body and a removable blood stain was instantly transformed into a gore splattered nightmare. The house, of course, became the object of removal; there was no way to clean up that mess even if a man as lazy as Williams had wanted to. Fire finally did the trick, as Williams wasn't too lazy to pick up a gas can and strike a match.

Williams employed enough gasoline in the burning of the house to ensure that not only did the body completely burn up, the copper wires melted down the wall. His victim was finally identified by the remains of one tooth.

A dog, an explosion and a fire; a body disposal of spectacular proportions and one that couldn't have drawn more attention to the crime than if it had been planned. Throw in a talkative friend who likes to drink a bit and Williams might as well have saved the authorities the time and dumped the body on the front steps of the local police station. An utter failure in the annals of body disposal, but intriguing nonetheless.

Lazy as he was, Williams wasn't entirely off track. Employing animals in the Fine Art is not without precedent. One of the most prolific animal feeders lived, ironically, in Indiana, the home of our latest cadaver carvers. (Probably something in the

water; perhaps a dead body or two.)

In a class by herself, a combination of Crafts and Gacy, Belle Gunness had a plan. She was the "keep 'em close to home" type.

Belle's basic method of disposal was her hog farm. With a butcher's block in the basement and a herd of hogs, life was rosy and bodies were scarce. Belle may be thought as one of the first true environmentalists. Her method of disposal was environmentally friendly, no noxious smoke, no messy burials; everything recycled. She was ahead of her time, a true humanitarian and lover of nature.

Not everybody has a hog farm and, as we have seen, dogs aren't that reliable. What about the eminently useful Florida alligator? Tales abound of Everglade body disposals, of "feeding 'em to the gators."

Stake out the poor victim and the gators will descend upon him en masse. Not true. Gators can't chew and if they can't swallow it, they'll wait for it to rot sufficiently for easy limb removal.



The alligator is a natural professional practitioner of the fine art of body disposal.

Gators are also territorial, any body they claim will be their own and no other gator can come near. To ensure the safety of their food supply they often move the body. Nothing attracts attention faster than a gator swimming around with a dead, or for that matter living, body in its mouth. It's almost as bad as a house fire.

In New York bodies "sleep with the fishes," in Florida with the gators and in Louisiana with the blue crab. If one can understand what a Cajun is saying, and few can, the story usually goes that "Day kin et a boady in tirty minutes, ah swear...seen it mah self."

For comparison, rats, those warm-blooded garbage disposals on feet, can't even strip a body in a month, even when swarming en masse. Crabs, being cold-blooded, eat even less. That is not to say crabs don't help the decomposition

process, they certainly do. Crabs are known as the "sanitary engineers" of the ocean, a well deserved label.

Crabs are "carrion eaters," they eat anything they can, keeping their territory sanitary and clear of dead flesh. In the wake of our recent tsunami, Indian and Indonesian fish-mongers are having a hard time selling their product. With so many bodies lost at sea, most people don't want to eat seafood that's been dining on human remains. Well educated professors have sworn to the hesitant consumers that, by the tsunami's churning action, plenty of the sea creatures' traditional food has been made available. Professor Peter Ng of the National University of Singapore went so far as to assert that "the fish and crabs have plenty of their natural food supply and don't have to resort to eating dead human flesh." That's an amazing statement coming from a crustacean expert. Crabs eat dead flesh. Dead humans are made of dead flesh, the crabs natural food supply. Crabs just simply don't have the intelligence to



The aftermath of Piranhas

pass up a free meal.

The only hope for a reliable animal disposal, besides a handy hog farm, is the piranha, said to be able to strip a cow to bone in minutes.

Rumors of breeding schools have been reported in south Florida canals. The day may come when the aspiring practitioner of the Fine Art can invite a victim down, play a round of golf, nick him a bit and toss the poor soul into the canal. Of course our practitioner, being the consummate professional, would make sure the school was available when needed, perhaps by throwing in a side of beef the night before.

The only truly reliable body disassembler is the serial killer's best friend, the lowly maggot. The child



A body is left to the only reliable body disassembler: the maggot.

of the blow fly is second only in ferocity and completeness of destruction to the piranha. Given the proper weather (hot) and the proper location (outside and uncovered) maggots can reduce a body to a sack full of bones within two weeks. Now you know why the tsunami victims were so hurriedly buried. They were running from the flies. Bones alone, especially in a disaster of such magnitude, are hard to identify.

The body's been dumped, skele-

tonization is complete, all is well. Not quite.

The hardest thing to get rid of is that pesky skeleton. The last vessel of our humanity, our bones, demand to tell our story in defiance of death. What the flesh forgets the bones remember and a certain breed of scientists are just dying to hear their tales.

Forensic anthropologists are well-educated in the art of reading bones. From one bone it is possible to ascertain the age, height, sex and even health of an

individual, all with reasonable accuracy. Mummies reveal secrets a thousand years old. Even Francisco Pizarro could not escape their attentions.

Dr. Maples, that incurably curious human, examined the bones of the long dead Spanish conquistador and noted "no fewer than four sword thrusts to the neck" as well as defensive wounds to the hands and a nicked rib. Pizarro's last

day was obviously not a happy one.

With the advent of DNA typing, bones have become even more talkative. Even the slightest sliver of bone is enough to produce a match. With the numerous bone fragments that Crafts tossed about the countryside, a stay in jail was inevitable. However, his case, like that of Williams, was solved by the discovery of one tooth, perhaps the oldest method of positive skeletal identification.



The dental structure of a longdead victim

Teeth are the bane of the aspiring body disposal practitioner. Even with expert cremation, in an oven costing thousands of dollars, where a DNA match is rendered completely impossible; teeth remain.

Gunness, body disposal expert par excellence, was herself identified by her own teeth. Even among the founders of our country, Joseph Warren, hero of Bunker Hill, was identified by dentures made for him by Paul Revere.

That one part of our skeleton, indestructible and visible to the world, often remains to speak to those determined to find our killers. And with a smile, our bodies dare to thwart the effort of even the most accomplished practitioner of the Fine Art of Body Disposal.



The skeleton is everlasting proof of our existence.

Blessed Be Torture: The Catholic Connection

By RC Hooker

The unconscionable torture of prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq by the U.S. military did not arise from "a few bad apples" as the U.S. Government claims. The torture was too systemic, too organized and too well-documented for it to have occurred without the knowledge and approval of the powers that be.

As reprehensible as that may seem, the tacit approval given by the Department of Defense is comparable in many ways to the official policy of torture once sanctioned by the Roman Catholic Church.

The madness and mayhem began with Pope Innocent IV. The Holy Inquisition was well underway when, in 1252, the Pontiff issued a Papal Bull—*ad extirpanda*—stating that, "If torture is appropriate for those who break the laws of men, then it is more than fitting for those who break the laws of God." Any disobedience, even in thought, was punishable.

The Church position on torture until that time was one of revulsion and condemnation. As early as 384, the synod in Rome condemned torture. Pope Nicholas, five hundred years later, agreed, ruling that torture was a violation of divine law. But the politics of the Middle Ages changed dramatically with the crusade against the Albigensian heretics. Along with that defining crusade came a change of attitude. The true believers of the Church felt compelled by God to abandon dignity and respect and replace reason with sheer terror.

After Innocent IV gave the green light to stock up on whips and chains, the priests were not exactly eager to jump into the bloody fray. With their own mortal souls at stake, they hired common thugs to perform the dirty deeds. But that proved to be less than satisfying to the clergy's bloodlust.

The Pope issued a second Papal Bull four years later stating that not only was it okay for priests to participate in the torture, they could absolve one another of any associated sins or "irregularities." Thus, it was official and the suffering of the innocent could be heard loud and clear throughout Europe.

The group most responsible for the heretics' agony and the priests' ecstasy was the elite of church enforcement, the Dominicans. The Pope had previously placed the Holy Order in charge of hearing confes-

sions in 1221, and they were also given the responsibility of running the courts. They were subject to no one except His Holiness and were a law unto themselves, both as prosecutors and as judges.

Interestingly, presaging the ven-



A Headpress used as an ancient torture device

ture into official torture, the Dominicans were busy persecuting the Jews, claiming the Jewish Talmud had defamed the Christian faith. The Jews were, in effect, a sort of warm-up for the Inquisition when the real torture began.

The Dominicans were given guidance in their mission with a how-to manual called *Libro Nero* (Black Book), detailing the procedures and the equipment. Its primary dictum was *citra membri diminutionem et mortis periculum*, which meant "do not kill and do not amputate." The limitations allowed their perverted minds to come up with some deviously ingenious methods.

The first session took place by putting the suspect in what is called the Heretic's Chair. The accused was strapped firmly to a chair that had sharp spikes jutting out of the back, up through the seat and along its arms. One such chair had over 1,300 spikes to pierce the flesh of the victim. Some modification of the chair involved the use of studded leg and foot rests. The suspect was restrained with a metal chest band and metal wrist cuffs.

Of course, sitting in a chair with metal spikes digging into one's body is bad enough, but the interrogator

had an additional means of encouraging confession. The chair had a metal compartment beneath the seat that could be loaded with hot coals. By varying the amount of coals, the torturer could apply questioning in various degrees. Hence, the modern-day lingo "giving someone the third degree," "grilling the suspect" and "putting someone in the hot seat."

Technically, the formulation of degrees of torture didn't take hold until the 16th century. The first degree was that of words, a verbal threat by the interrogator as a means of gentle coercion. This was the appeal to reason, explaining to people that if they were innocent they had nothing to fear. Of course, it was a bogus ploy and used in much the same manner as modern-day police questioning.

The second degree was comprised of showing the defendant the types of instruments that would be employed if they failed to cooperate during the initial questioning. It was a scare tactic, pure and simple. If that didn't work, the priests moved on to the third degree, which was the actual torture itself.

When the confession of the person in the hot seat was not forthcoming, hot coals were applied directly to the feet, which were often smeared with lard to facilitate the roasting. This gave rise to another modern-day euphemism, "holding their feet to the fire." That such terminology is used so frequently today is testament to the enduring legacy of torture and its undeniable hold on our psyches.

When it came to "stretching the truth," the holy friars had a variety of racks to choose from. The simplest was nothing more than an elongated, narrow bench with wrist restraints at one end and a pulley at the other. Physiologically, the first joints to pop were the vertebra, which are held together only by thin cartilage. Next were the ball and socket joints, such as the shoulder, the knees and then the hips. The last to go were the rib joints, the wrists, and the hinge joints at the elbows. Once dislocated, the person was obviously unable to perform any of the functions of daily living and a slow death followed after they were tossed into the dungeon.

Remember that being locked away in a dungeon was just as much a form of torture as anything else in

the priests' arsenal of fiendish instruments. If the rats didn't eat you, some other malevolent pestilence would. To make matters worse, the prisoners had to pay for their own food. If the church had already taken away their property and money, the prisoners' days were certainly numbered, and a sentence to languish inside the bowels of a dungeon was the same as a sentence of immediate death.

A popular variation of the rack was the wheel. People were lashed to a rotating wheel with their arms secured to a chain in the wall behind them. As modern physics can attest, it didn't take much pressure to move the wheel, and bones separated easily with little effort being used to achieve that painful end. Elongation of bodies was reported by various sources to over 12 inches, a result of systematic dislocation of every joint in the body.

A first-hand account of torture on the wheel was written in 1482. According to the chronicler, the victim was turned "into a sort of huge screaming puppet writhing in rivulets of blood, a puppet with tentacles, like a sea monster, of raw, slimy and shapeless flesh mixed up with splinters of smashed bones."

Perhaps the Dominican interrogators got the idea of the wheel from the Romans who used the same apparatus to torture the infidels refusing to acknowledge the authority of Rome. What goes around comes around, and nothing was rounder than the wheel in all of its gruesome symbolism.

Bones were not the only part of the anatomy stressed on the rack. Internal organs suffered as well. There were documented cases of the priests actually removing parts of the body and then using the rack. A small incision would be made in the abdomen and a piece of intestine pulled out. The end of the intestine was tied off with a tortillon—a kind of tourniquet—and then extracted slowly from the gut over a period of time. The person could literally see themselves unraveling, their intestines piling up horrifically on the rack.

Doing their work slowly offered an advantage to the torturers for several reasons. The most obvious reason was that it gave the accused a chance to reconsider their cries of innocence, knowing that even greater horrors awaited them.

Second, the Church, in its merciful and heartfelt magnanimity, decreed that no person could be tortured more than once, sort of like a double

jeopardy.

But the rule-makers failed to set parameters as to what constituted a single session. Thus, the inquisitors were free to leave the victim tied to the rack, go home for dinner and maybe a glass of wine or two, and come back the next day and consider it a single session. A person could lie in that tormented state for days before either dying or being released to be burnt at the stake. It was Catch 22 all the way.

Strappado, which in Italian means literally "sharp pull or tug," was another common form of interrogation. The hands of the accused were tied behind their back to an iron bar and hoisted into the air. They would hang for hours, often with weights, called burden stones, added to the feet to increase the pain. A thematic variation was squassation. A person was hoisted high into the air and then dropped violently, dislocating joints and breaking bones and tearing tendons from sockets, much like the rack, only faster.

The water torture was especially popular with the mad monks because of its association with ritualized purification, an allusion to the coming witchcraft trials. A cloth was shoved down the throat, the nose pinched off, and literally gallons of water poured into the stomach by means of a funnel. When the suspect was bloated to near bursting, they were tipped upside down to force pressure on the lungs and heart, producing a state of semi-suffocation. The process would be done repeatedly.

While undergoing the process of filling the gut, the priests would bind the arms and legs with cords so tight that sometimes the veins would explode. Whether the person confessed or not, the priests were more than overjoyed because the water torture left no signs of abuse whatsoever.

Historians have debated the real motives behind much of the torture that took place in the Middle Ages, during the Inquisition, which lasted for over 200 years. Ostensibly, the entire purpose was designed to root out heretics whose beliefs threatened the integrity of the Catholic Church. But the Church, as well as the priests, stood to gain much more than just a faithful flock who adhered to catechistic doctrines.

The first thing that happened if you were charged with heresy was that your property could be seized. Anyone—including a stranger who didn't even know you and was per-

haps envious of your wealth or position in the community—could bring about a charge against someone for having a lax faith. The right to face your accuser in court belonged to English, not Roman, law and so secret indictments were standard operating procedure.

Not even the dead were exempt from accusatory charges. It was not uncommon for bodies to be exhumed, placed on trial, and the already-dead remains burned at the stake. The rightful heirs were likewise denied due process and the property expropriated. Condemning the dead during the start of the Inquisition became so prevalent that land contracts in Florence, Italy, came with a "heretic's clause," promising the buyer reimbursement if the Church later confiscated the property.

The living would envy the dead, however, as the methods of torture became increasingly intrusive and creative. Not surprisingly, the parts of the anatomy affected gravitated towards the sexual.

Bearing in mind the admonition of the Black Book, the monks enjoyed experimenting with various body orifices. A popular device was the "pear," so-called because of its obvious shape. It was inserted into the anus or vagina and, by means of an internal screw it was widened larger and larger to the maximum aperture of its segments. The inside of the cavity in question was irretrievably mutilated, and often fatally so. Pointed prongs at the end of the pear's segments also served to rip into the intestines or the cervix. When the priests finished with their sexual machinations, the body displayed no visible signs of torture.

The constraints not to kill or maim soon became lost in a bureaucratic maze, as official dictates are want to do, and newer and bloodier methods came into vogue. Head presses became popular, as did methods that squeezed and squashed other body parts. Thumbs were tops on the list and special devices known as thumbscrews were used to mash them. A device called turcas was often used to rip off the fingernails. Slipping something under the nailbed was another way to cause excruciating pain without leaving traces of torture.

The Judas Cradle was perhaps the most inventive and sadistic means of extracting confessions. A person was hoisted into the air by means of a harness and then lowered over a metal or stone pyramid, which was inserted into the anus or

vagina, if a woman. The person had control over their fate by exerting pressure on the rope harness. But one could only keep up the resistance for so long before tiring and impaling themselves onto the pyramid, no doubt delighting those present.

With the prisoner tied to any of these horrific devices, the inquisitor would sometimes employ a variety of more brutal tortures. Red hot pincers would tear off nipples, tongues, ears, noses and genitals. Crosses branded into the flesh of the shrieking wretch brought him/her closer to God and His infinite mercy. Either way, you were damned if you confessed and damned if you didn't.



A torture victim has body parts cut off, including nipples and skin

Confessions aside, the persecution of heretics that continued unabated for 200 years was nothing more than a warm-up for the Mother of all Tortures, the Spanish Inquisition, also sanctioned by the Catholic Church. This time the Pope was Sixtus IV. His Papal Bull in 1478 prompted the inquisitors to take off the kiddie gloves and get down and dirty, and lethal. Gone was the caution not to inflict corporeal punishment. To enter the Gates of Heaven you had to first pass through the Gates of Hell.

The focus of this holy Inquisition was none other than the Jews. In Spain, they had risen to positions of prominence and wealth, and not just individual families but as a group.

Spain, being a world power in

the 15th century, was an amalgam of religions and the Papal hierarchy wanted a unified country, all Catholic. Aiding this pious end was the devout Queen Isabella. Heeding her call, Jews converted to Catholicism en masse and became known as Conversos. The only problem is that their conversions were, for the most part, in name only and many continued to practice the Jewish faith. Hence there was a call to cleanse Spain of these "lying" heretics.

Adding fuel to the fires that would soon rage with the burning bodies of the Jews was the rumor circulated among the people that Jews were killing Christian children.

It was given the term, "blood libel." It didn't make any difference whether or not the charges were true, but it gave the populace and the priests more than enough justification to go after the Conversos with a vengeance.

The psychopathological fiend in charge was Tomas de Torquemada, a man who, ironically, had a grandmother that was a Converso. His reign of terror in the first year resulted in the burning of more than 800 people alive.

Numerous instruments of torture were unique to the Spanish Inquisition. Among them was the Spanish tickler. It was a simple rake-like device with iron claws shaped like those of a cat—hence its nickname "cat's paw." With the accused hanging from a chain, their arms above their head, the interrogator would run the claws over the victim's body, converting it into a ribbon of torn flesh.

Not to be outdone by those who thought up the tickler, the human imagination came up with the "heretic's fork" as yet another display of cruelty. This instrument consisted of two little forks one set against the other and four prongs rammed into the flesh, under the chin and above the chest. A small collar supported the instrument in such a manner that the victims were forced to hold their heads erect, preventing any movement. The forks did not penetrate any vital points, and thus suffering was prolonged and death avoided. The victims' hands were, of course, tied behind their backs.

When the Dominicans weren't busy flaying their hapless victims, they were building fires of green wood to cook them. In all, some

300,000 people were burnt at the stake before the Spanish Inquisition ended...in 1834!

The position of the Catholic Church on torture remained on the books for centuries and it is unlikely that the situation would have changed were it not for an Italian nobleman by the name of Cesare Boccara. His 1764 book, Crimes and Punishment, influenced the framers of the U.S. Constitution so much so that they included in the 8th amendment a provision that prohibited "cruel and unusual punishment." Embarrassed, or perhaps ashamed, Pope Pius VII issued a Papal Bull in 1816 that ended over 500 years of official torture.

Rational, compassionate people would assume that such grotesque and inhuman policies would have been relegated to the dustbins of history, especially considering the progress we have made in our 21st century civilization. But, as Frank Zappa so presciently intoned in one of his musical masterpieces, the torture never stops.

The ecclesiastical cadres who are now attempting to run the world's only "superpower," are just as blood-thirsty and fervent in their desire to rid the world of its Muslim infidels and would-be terrorists as were the tireless crusaders in Spain during the Inquisition. The results are yet another form of federally approved torture.

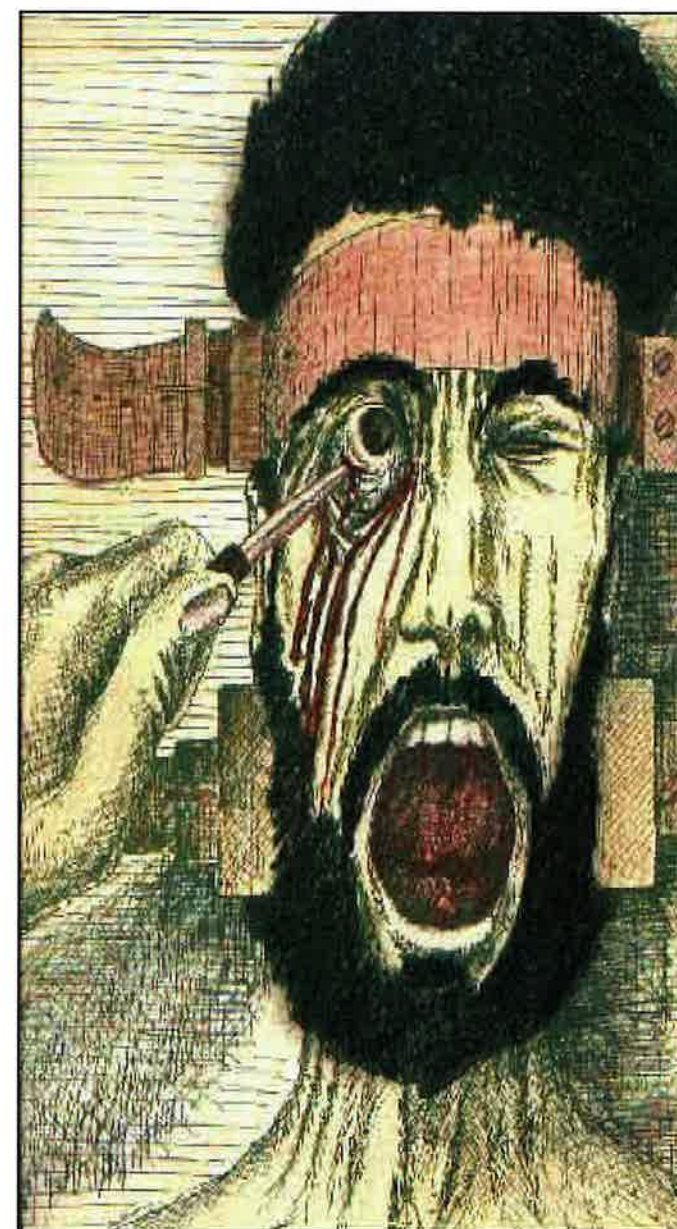
Modern man has attempted to design a set of laws to discourage the torture of people for any reason, and this has been codified by the United Nations under the Geneva Convention, which was established after World War II. The United States was a signatory to this convention, which states in Article 2: Each State Party shall take effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent acts of torture in any territory under its jurisdiction.

Torture is defined in the U.N. Convention on Torture as "any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession." On October 21, 1994, the United States became a party to the "Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment." Article 2, Section 2 of the Convention states: "No exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability, or any other public emergency,

may be invoked as a justification for torture."

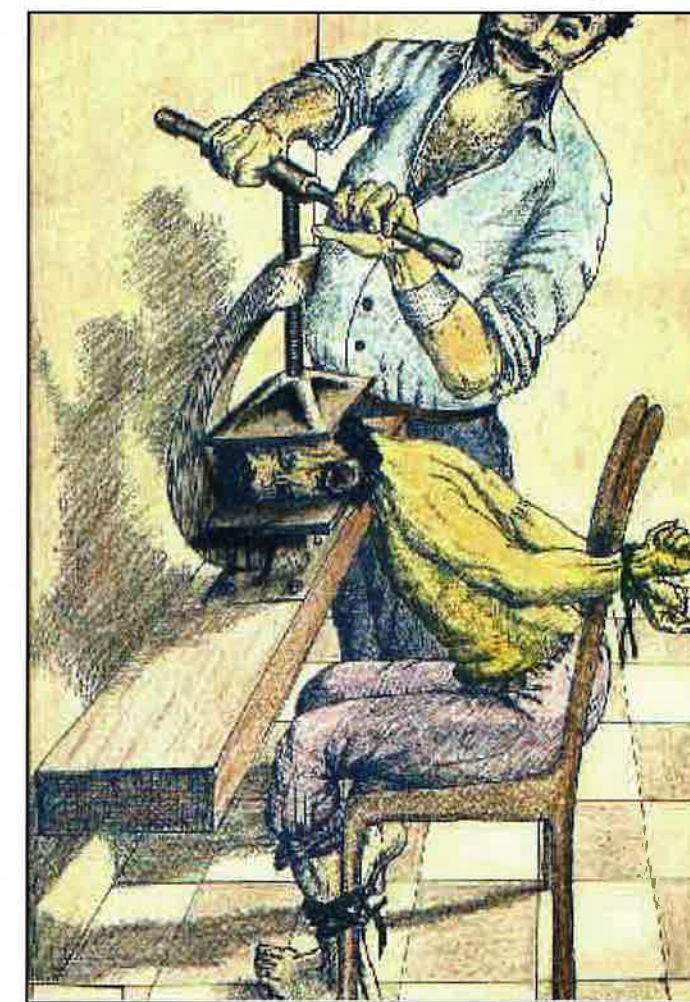
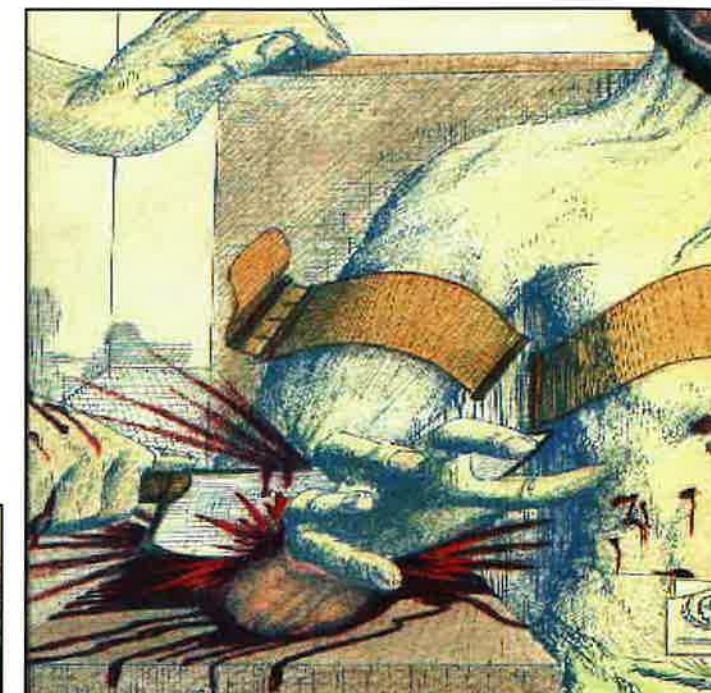
The United States is one of the 127 countries that have signed and ratified the Convention on Torture, a convention that the judges at the Hague Tribunal have ruled, "signals to all members of the international community that the prohibition on torture is an absolute value from which nobody must deviate."

While it is true that man's inhumanity to man is endemic to the species, it is likely to continue until we undergo a profound biological change in nature. Judging from the current, sickening examples of torture served up by the media and the proliferation of U.S. gulags the world over, we are going to stagnate, perhaps even regress for a long, long time to come.



The Iraqi Baath Party tortured prisoners and dissidents with methods such as eye gouging, tongue removal, the head press and limb removal--not unlike those procedures used during the Inquisition.

Illustrations of Several Popular Torture Methods Used by Baath Party In Iraq



Hysteria's Roots: The Origin and Myth of Modern-Day Snuff

By Michael Cavallaro

Lights. Action. Murder.

For more than three decades, the snuff film has remained one of popular culture's darkest and most subterranean caveats of urban legend. Though urban legends often prove false, many attribute their unlikely beginnings to real life events—usually spun through some cautionary combination of elements, creating a story plausible enough to be taken for real. Such is the origin of snuff, that indefinable who, when and where of a supposedly authentic murder captured on film for commercial profit. While the term "snuff" refers to a brand of filmmaking in which the victim is purposely killed in the interest of the viewer, its existence depends largely upon the nature of its dasification. Transmogrified over the years, its myth has been perpetuated by hysteria, hoaxes, politically motivated gains, and ultimately, the unknotting of censorship.

First coined by Ed Sanders in his book, *The Family, The Story of Charles Manson's Dune Buggy Attack Battalion*, the term comes from an interview in which an anonymous former member of the Manson Family relates hearing about a movie short they made of a female victim lying dead on a beach just shortly before the Tate/La Bianca murders in August of 1969. Not to be dismissed as coincidence, Family members that very summer did steal an NBC-TV truck loaded with film equipment, which authorities later recovered following their arrest. While the legend of snuff grew exponentially after that, it is Sanders who is credited for the use of the term in describing what were purportedly a string of brutality clips made during that summer of blood. Popularized in subsequent literature, Vincent Bugliosi's 1974 *Helter Skelter*, which

also chronicled their murderous activities, only added to the myth that all of it had been put somewhere on film.

By the time of their sentencing to prison, it was rumored that the Manson Family had also been using the cameras to make homemade porno films. Yet, as the myth continued to gain its own gravity, hysteria could do nothing to dissuade people from the idea that the films were "out there" in spite of Sanders' later admission that nothing had ever surfaced. Like all snuff, the answer was somewhere between a sight unseen and the evocable figments of imagination.

"Under the auspices of snuff, the victim must be human, the genre porn and the intent commercial"



MANSION, Charles Miles

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What followed in its wake was a popular culture that formed its own connections and bridged the gap between suspected butchery and pornography at large.

Throughout the 1970's, the Manson myth of snuff *deuce ex-machina* became inextricably linked to the industry of sex, furthering snuff's definition as a sex film wherein the "actor" is raped and abused, then killed in the final act.

In his 1977 book *The Film Maker's Guide to Pornography*, Steven Ziplow writes: "Snuff films are those in which the final sexual act is murder. No hard evidence has ever been presented that such films do exist, but rumor has it that there are a very few 8mm films to be had at a very high price. The major trouble with producing this sort of film is that you are constantly forced to be on the lookout for new talent."

The idea in itself was eventually re-simulated by operatic fetish fads of what later became the bondage

genre in adult film. Loath to the new gestalt, moralists in the anti-pornography ring used people like Linda Lovelace, star of 1972's *Deep Throat*, as whistleblowers in an attempt to bring down the industry as a whole. In David Kerekes' book, *Killing for Culture*, Lovelace testifies to the U.S. Attorney General's Commission on Organized Crime that women were being murdered on camera. Ultimately, however, Lovelace was discredited as an ex-porn queen, whose aim to collapse the industry intercepted that of the feminist agenda, and more so because snuff had already been exposed on countless occasions as a hoax.

No greater example of deception can be found than that in the Manson-inspired film *Slaughter*, brought to production in Argentina just a year after the Manson clan received their sentencing in

1970. Touted for its graphic content, the film's original release generated little interest until the following year when a film producer by the name of Allan Shackleton bought the distribution rights and re-released it under the title, *Snuff*. Whatever Shackleton lacked in terms of product was more than compensated by his ability to stir the kind publicity its original makers had failed generate. In a move the creators of *The Blair Witch Project* would emulate some 20-plus years later, Shackleton distributed fake newspaper clippings to give the film's content some artificial grounding in reality. In this case, the clippings concerned that of a fictionalized attorney's crusade to stop the film through an organization called Citizens for Decency. Unbeknownst to him, the organization did in fact exist, and in their ignorance of Shackleton's ploy were more than happy to fan the flames. As a result, critics everywhere followed the wave of hysteria and denounced the unreleased film, giving credence to what was otherwise another clever cinematic fake.

What followed in the wake of its New York release in January 1976 was a lot of legal claptrap that forced Shackleton to carry a disclaimer that virtually admitted the

film's lack of real-life authenticity, although by then the public was already convinced that if Shackleton's film wasn't snuff, something else out there was. Exhaustive inquiries by law enforcement combined with the inability to produce anything tangible was all that sated the public's morbidity after it had been aroused.

Ironically, with films like *Cannibal Holocaust* (1979) and *The Art of Dying* (1986), false alarms have continued to propel the myth toward some kind of legendary status. More recently from a series of Japanese video productions otherwise known as *Za Ginipiggu*, or *The Flower of Flesh and Blood of the*



A screenshot from a fake internet snuff video

Guinea Pig, featuring samurais torturing their victims with disclaimers that cleverly avoid the outright admission of fallacy that so beleaguered Shackleton's *Snuff*. When its third installment was viewed at a Hollywood party in 1991, actor Charlie Sheen—convinced that he'd seen a snuff film—immediately contacted the Motion Picture Association of America to stop the distribution of the *Guinea Pig* films. What Sheen thought was snuff turned out to be a fake and the film was later shown on San Francisco's public access channel in October 1996.

Perhaps the most telling of snuff's longstanding absence from the record of purview is Al Goldstein, publisher of *Screw* magazine, and his on-the-table-offer of one million dollars to anyone who can come up with hard evidence of an authenticated snuff film. So far, no one has answered the claim. But lacking in qualifications are the methods by which it can be proved, as well as the personal risks that individuals would take in actually coming forward.

But if qualifications by method prove suspect, so too do its defini-

tions. There is no doubt as to the authenticity of killing in nature films, nor to the fact that its filming has become a lucrative and perfectly acceptable medium. In the BBC aired *Trials of Life: A Natural History of Behavior*, 8-ton whales plunder off the coast of Patagonia to pluck baby sea lions from the beach, while in other grisly scenes chimpanzees butcher colobus monkeys on the Ivory Coast. But under the auspices of snuff, the victim must be human, the genre porn and the intent commercial. Yet, even those traditional definitions are being challenged in places like London where animal snuff films are widely gaining in popularity. Otherwise known as "crush films," a type of filmmaking in which small animals are crushed under women's feet, the violence committed against animals have followed the same evolutionary lifeline as the snuff film in terms of its origins.

Not surprisingly, it was the politically motivated campaigns of the 1970's that sparked controversy over the documentation of baby whitecoats seals having their heads split open with clubs against blinding white ice floes. The films brought forth by animal rights activists, including The Canadian Association for Humane Trappings production of the CBS-aired, *They Take So Long to Die* are what led to the 1972 U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act ban on both the import and sale of all marine animal products, regardless of the conservation status of the species.

However, by the time these laws were brought to bare, the Canadian sealing industry claimed it was already illegal to kill the whitecoats, and that by strictly enforced procedure the adults were killed by rifles. With these methods in place, the industry claimed the videos were staged and thus became so notorious they created the term "animal snuff." It was later learned that the animals were caught in the wild and filmed in a compound by the politically motivated.

Nevertheless, the animal snuff film origin through hoax, hysteria and commercial or political gains have birthed a new kind of enterprise. Perpetuated by all four, the controversy of animal snuff lived on long enough to find a market in the porn industry, thus morphing the term in the 1990's the way bondage had in the 1970's. Wrote Tony Thompson of the London *Observer*: crush films "occupy the cross-over point between extreme [foot] fetishist pornography and, despite

being illegal, generate hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of sales."

In a December 1999 law introduced by President Clinton, it became a federal felony to possess a "depiction of animal cruelty" for commercial gain. The law, although purposeful, only furthered the crush film's legitimacy as a definable form of snuff.

While most crush films use small animals as their victims, its market demand constantly pushes the limits. Wrote Cassandra Brown in London's *Daily Telegraph*: "In one confiscated video...a woman wearing stiletto shoes is shown stamping on a hamster. After she steps on the immobilized animal, the camera zooms in to show the terrified hamster, which, despite its broken back, struggles to escape. The woman stamps on it five times before it dies and she grinds it into the floor."

Grim description, but according to the article, no size is too small. Jeff Vilencia of Squish Productions says that rather than pay for the video he and others provide, fans of the genre have undertaken their own productions, and in some cases, to the extreme. "In Germany there's a big black market for these films and there seems to be no limit to the size of the animal," he said. "They use cats and dogs and also, I'm told, have filmed different kinds of films with horses, which are ridden bareback until they are exhausted then shot dead on camera. I would not do that." Under fire by the FBI, certain Web sites even show livestock being skinned alive, with others reportedly selling kittens stuffed into Mason jars. Regarding crush films, the sale or distribution—but not possession—of such videos is illegal in Britain.

Animal cruelty was also featured in the 80's through the *Faces of Death* series, a partially staged, partially real chronicle of, obviously enough—the faces of death. So huge were its sales that it spawned a litany of sequels, including additional series such as *Traces of Death* (1993), *Death Scenes* (1989), and a host of one-time originals like *World of Death* and *Executions*.

Human nature being what it is, it's reasonable to assume that if true snuff films existed, there would be those willing to pay to have them. Therein lies the even greater assumption that an underground distribution network in some small form exists, if not in countries that ban it, then in ones that don't. Prior to the fall of Baghdad, rumors abounded of Saddam Hussein's appetite for snuff. Certainly there is nothing to preclude

those regions where human rights are badly lagging from making films that answer the First World's visceral thirst for horrors ranging far beyond its own. In places like London, we may have already seen the beginning of that.

According to the London's *Observer*, a new form of snuff called *snipe* may have once again changed the genre's bloodline. Snipe—the term coined by authorities after finding the word marked on a series of confiscated boxes via Russia to Italy—is a form of child pornography in which the children are seen either naked or undressing, then subjected to various abuses that lead to their death. As the *Observer* reported in 2000, British pedophiles were paying between 50 and 100 pounds to a Russian porn ring that was broken up, leading to the arrest of Dmitri Vladimirovich Kuznetsov, to whom police traced the origin of the violent porn videos. Subsequent raids of Kuznetsov's home produced huge quantities of films, as well as lists of clients in Italy, Germany, the United States and Britain. According to the *Observer*, "Though the two men arrested with Kuznetsov were also imprisoned by Moscow authorities, only one of the three remains behind bars. Dmitri Ivanov was sentenced to eleven years for actually participating in the abuse that was being filmed. The others were released under an amnesty aimed at clearing Russia's overcrowded prisons."

Though the children were dying on the videos, the qualifications as snuff were nebulous. For one thing,

no one knows whether the children were killed on purpose or whether it was a direct result of the systematic abuse. For another, it remains uncertain whether or not the customers bought the films under the auspices of child pornography or snuff. With evidence compiled against 500 customers—among them businessmen, public employees and a university student—the only evidence pointing to a specific request for snuff came under a transcript published by the Naples newspaper *Il Mattino* of an alleged e-mail exchange between a prospective client and the vendor. "Relax," says one of the Russians, "I can assure you this one really dies."

Even so, what the pedophiles were paying for was child pornography, rendering all other suspicions virtually nil. Following Kuznetsov's arrest, there were dozens of other finds, including the discovery that his associates had recruited around a hundred boys, ages nine to 15, for their films. With their scouting area within Moscow directed mostly toward train stations and orphanages, these were places where the children were easily persuaded, as some—according to the Russian press—were even commissioned to find other children.

True snuff evades us like a ghost. And like a ghost, haunts without enough physical structure for us to know if it's staring us in the face. The snuff film rumor has even been associated with some of the world's most notorious serial killers. David Berkowitz, for example, was rumored to have filmed his murders for the

Church of Satan, purposes-unknown. But as author Maury Terry writes in his book, *The Ultimate Evil*, a recording accomplice may have been parked in a van across the street on the night Berkowitz killed Stacy Moskowitz. "Witnesses have confirmed this," writes Terry, "although the van never appeared in the police report." Terry believes the film was made for Roy Radin, "the wannabe Cotton Club financier," who, he notes, "was known for his huge porno collection and wanted to add a snuff film to it. I've heard there are ten copies of this film floating around, although I've never seen it."

Other cases include serial killers whose videos featured their victims either just before or after the act of murder. Such was the case in the murders committed by husband-and-wife duo Paul Bernardo and Karla Homolka, whose videotapes feature the rape of their victim at knifepoint. Used in the court proceedings of their prosecution, Bernardo is seen urinating on the victim while attempting to defecate on her. No film of the murder was found.

The idea of the snuff film has come a long way since the days of the Manson family. That fateful summer when a fully equipped news van was burglarized changed the landscape of all that we wish to keep unbidden in the world. The superstructure of fear has germinated into what for the moment remains nothing more than the urban legend of present day. And when the crimes are gone, all we have are the records.

Bind, Torture, Arrest

By George Illich



Kansas, the Sunflower State. A peaceful and easy-going place until Dennis Rader unleashed an anonymous killing spree in the early 1970s. Over the next 17 years, Rader is alleged to have murdered 10 people including two children that he strangled with his bare hands.

He kept in constant communication with the media and police and called himself BTK (representing his modus operandi: bind, torture and kill). His cautionary and predatory methods kept him one step ahead of law enforcement agencies and he evaded capture until February 2005. Police arrested the 59-year-old and charged him with multiple counts of first-degree murder and are detaining him on a \$10 million bond.

Dennis Rader is married and has two children, and until his arrest had been an active Cub Scout leader and participant of his local Lutheran Church. His work history includes a high-level position with a local security company. As the company's installation manager, Rader was given free access to customers' homes. This employment lasted from 1974 to 1989, the same time period that the murders took place.

After he left the security job, he obtained a municipal position as a code-enforcement officer and was extremely diligent at his job. He remained respected and admired by many in the community, never giving reason to believe that he was anything other than a sincere and devoted family man with sound morals.

After 1991, the killings stopped and the police, hard-pressed for evidence, ran out of investigative options. The case went cold and police focused on more recent crimes. However, in March 2004, for reasons not yet known, Rader

launched another round of letters to the police and the media. Most probably, this was an attempt to re-enter the spotlight. Police managed to obtain DNA evidence from the letters and packages they received from Rader, a move that proved valuable after Rader's daughter submitted a sample of her blood upon suspicion of her father. The 90 percent match was all the police needed to name Dennis Rader the prime suspect and arrested him without incident.

Police charged Rader with 10 counts of first-degree murder, including the grizzly murders of four members of the Otero family in 1974. Julie and Joseph Otero, along with their two young children, were bound and strangled. This senseless slaying of an entire family set the pace and tone of Rader's death spree. Other victims included Kathryn Bright (stabbed in 1974), Shirley Vian (strangled in 1977), Nancy Fox (strangled in 1977) and Vicki Wegerle (strangled in 1986). Two other murders blamed on BTK include Marine Hedge (1985) and Delores Davis (1991). In addition to the cold-blooded killings, BTK would often torture his victims. (Currently, full details are sketchy, as this evidence had been withheld from the public). In the case of the Otero Family, speculation points to the possibility that Joseph Otero was forced to watch his wife and children strangled prior to his own murder. In addition, Rader use "t-knots"—a slip-knot in conjunction with an object like a pencil, ruler, metal rod or anything of that shape and nature (similar to a tourniquet). This technique requires much less effort to tighten a knot (or strangle a human being) and enables the user to loosen or tighten the knot as required.

One of the victims reportedly had her arms bound together behind her back in such a manner that Rader was able to use the t-knot to dislocate her shoulder, simply by applying pressure to the tightening rod. In addition, victims were bound for excruciating lengths of time, during which they were certainly aware that their deaths were imminent. Autopsies reveal that the victims had been bound so tightly, that the blood supply to their extremities was severely compromised and eventually led to tissue and muscle death. Missing clumps of hair and broken

teeth were also present on some of the victims, probably the result of a last-ditch attempt to stay alive.

Why did BTK resurface a year ago? Perhaps, as in many cases, the killer felt remorse and needed to confess and cleanse his burdening guilt. Although this scenario is a possibility, it is highly unlikely that Rader wanted to spend his golden years behind bars. A more realistic possibility is that Rader wanted to rejuvenate his news-worthiness. After years in the media spotlight, Rader missed the attention and began taunting the media and the police in order to re-ignite the interest that was once front-page news. Serial killers routinely taunt and ridicule police once they gain confidence and their crimes remain unsolved.

In this case, had Rader not re-initiated contact with the police, the murder cases would most likely have remained unsolved. What Rader did not count on was the modern DNA techniques available to law enforcement agencies and the fact that his own daughter would contribute to his capture.

What led to Rader's thirst for killing? That is one of the unsolved mysteries psychologists face with every case. There is no simple answer. In the BTK case, there is evidence that police obtained semen from the crime scenes, although none of the victims were sexually assaulted. This adds to the theory that some serial killers experience a sexual rush before, during or after they've taken the life of their victim. Throughout the numerous studies psychologists have undertaken regarding this subject, the underlying truth is that many convicted serial killers have admitted to achieving orgasm once they've committed their evil deed.

Rader was a family man with solid religious inclinations. His character was that of a rigid individual who had a tendency to "rub people the wrong way." He was a man whose deep beliefs influenced his demeanor. There were severe limitations to what he could or could not do, whether at work, at the dinner table and even in the privacy of his own bedroom.

At one point, Rader was president of his local Lutheran Church and a leader of the congregation. He was never able to fulfill his sexual

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desires, especially under the bright lights of the public eye. As a result, Rader began living a double life, so closely guarded that even his own wife appears to have had no idea that her husband was a predatory killing machine.

Serial killers are the first to admit that once they satisfy their hunger to take a life, the next killing is easier and more desirable. No doubt, Rader's lust for satisfaction led to his double life. As dangerous as it may seem, the challenge of being able to achieve notoriety took hold of Rader and transformed him into BTK.

Expect Rader to milk the unsolved murders in Kansas that he hasn't been charged with. He requires media attention and will not settle for less than total coverage.

He doesn't face death row. He doesn't have to stall his imminent

fate. Rader knows that he is destined to spend the rest of his life in detainment. But he is a serial killer and knows that he can gain more notoriety by being periodically cooperative. Rader will probably confess to more than the 10 murders he's alleged to have committed.

Rader experienced a seduction of media and now he's hooked. It would not be in character for him to disregard the attention. After all, does it really matter how many killings he has to confess to? One of the facts that can't be ignored is that Rader is not subject to the death penalty - the murders he is charged with all occurred while the state of Kansas had no such death penalty law. However, one of the unsolved crimes that police are re-investigating may have been committed while Kansas' death penalty law was in effect. If that is the case, Rader may

be charged and convicted with an offense that requires execution. In Kansas courts, once someone is convicted, the judge has no option but to sentence the defendant to death. State law is specific and mandatory. Rader may yet be convicted to die, but when and if this actually happens is pure speculation.

Was anyone else involved? Probably not. Were someone else involved, these crimes would have been solved years earlier. The best secret is one you don't share with anyone else. Rader, to our best knowledge, has not implicated anyone else in his confession. Nor has any police agency suspected a conspiracy. There is absolutely no evidence that Rader had one or more accomplices. The evidence points to only one man, Rader, who has voluntarily taken credit for the killings.

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Feedback

"This Website is the Devil": i just viewed your nasty autopsy on that 7 yr old girl and may i say that is so fucking sick of you guys to put that on a web site please believe im gonna get this web site off the web u sick fuckers..... this web site is the devil..... your going to hell

"Don't Encourage the Evil Among Us: It goes without saying that our world is quite a mess. I'm personally appreciative of the fact that we have free speech to the extent that websites such as yours can exist legally. Here's the thing... If you could post these images and occurrences in somewhat less a circus like atmosphere, I believe you would easily change the world. Seeing is very powerful. Some horrible people would gain from such a venture, but I truly feel that more good would come from posting this footage in a forum that doesn't encourage the evil amongst us.

"You People are Disgusting": You people are disgusting. Not because you show people being killed or mutilated. But when you showed an animal being skinned alive and beaten and it is still breathing, that makes me think that you are all in line to have the same thing happen to you. I would rather watch a thousand innocent people be slaughtered than see an animal beaten and mutilated in such a manner. Luckily, I don't know what you look like.

"Constant and true"

"Thanks": First off I just want to start this letter by saying thanks. I'm currently working on my doctoral dissertation in physical anthropology, which has taken the last three years of my life. I just finished my 15 month internship at my county's medical examiner's office. Needless to say, if it weren't for ogrish.com, I doubt I would have been able to cope with the gruesome scenes at the lab in the beginning. You guys really helped prepare me. Anyways, good luck with expanding your site and other publications (hell, I know a lot of med-students, forensic grad students, and physical anthropology students that would love to have an ogrish type academic journal) Anyways, once again...thanks

The Truth: I don't want to be exposed first off, so please disregard where this is coming from. Everyday I read and view what my media does not me be exposed to on your website. I just wanted to write and tell you that you that I appreciate that you reveal what is really going on in this world; especially in Iraq and Afghanistan. I want to send my heartfelt sorrow to the families who have been stricken with the loss of a loved one due to the Iraq and Afghanistan war. But, it is people like you that bring the conflict to people like me the real deal of true war and what it really devastates...American families. Yes, I watch beheadings and executions, it's because I do not want the American media to place its sugar coating effect over what is the truth. I am only a person that can plead for peace; and I know that will never be in the near future. I just wanted to say thank you for exposing the truth. May our higher being send our sons and daughters back to us harm-free. -Concerned American

Random Comments: Hi! Compliment for the site!!! All the world should see that videos!!! I don't care about tsunami, or other natural catastrophies..... The nature revenge is self....and this is very good!! I hope that the people that torture animals like that goes in Iraq on holiday to meet Al Sarqawi and return at home peace after peace.... So now i feel a little bit better. -Bye

Excellent Website: Keep up the phenomenal work! You have an excellent website. In this day and age of 'sanitized' pictures in our media, you are doing everyone a service by showing what violence and war are really all about, and what they can do to other people. Keep those Iraqi war images coming as well. Thank you for showing the truth.

Petition to Block Ogrish: I'm front running a campaign and petition to have your site blocked from Canadian server's. Your day has finally ended in Canada.

Can You Handle Death: Dear People at Ogrish,
Just finally submitting my personal comments about the website. After viewing it for a little over a year, I must say I have never felt the same about death and suffering. Notwithstanding the many disclaimers and warnings, I chose to view just a few extremely graphic articles. The one that I can't seem to get over is the Nick Berg beheading; this poor captive human being who is having his head severed right before one's eyes. This is the ultimate horror movie, no movie comes close. Such horror, and I couldn't stand to view it with sound. My heart is broken and I feel so helpless. Seeing the others follow just made me feel so helpless and basically paranoid about ever leaving the country to even visit a foreign land! Then I thought about your banner, Can you handle Life Quite appropriately stated. But even better yet, why not change it to Can you handle Death Oh well, just a passing thought.

Help to Victims: Hey, you all are expressing your right to free speech. But I hope there is some way that we can get help to any victim, no matter if it is a rat, dog, horse, goat or human, so that no more suffering like this can happen! I'm truly not the same, to see the horrors in this world, like a fresh slap in the face of reality. I have a saying of my own An Evil Hell Hound is on my trail; it's a game of hide and seek.

Ralph Emerges From the Mist

By Verwayne Greenhoe

...Continued from Issue One...

Ralph Emerges From the Mist

I remember very well the first time I encountered Ralph after the accident. We were at the ambulance base watching some television. Board games became tedious and on that particular night, there were three of us—playing euchre was not easy to do with three players. I saw Randy, the new guy, glance quickly to the archway that separated the living room from the kitchen. I also caught the look on his face like he had seen something and was confused because it was no longer there.

I knew that feeling, I'd felt it more and more often. Several times, just out of my field of vision but still in my line of sight, I would see something, turn to look at it and it was gone. Several times, the night before in fact, I woke up with the distinct feeling that I was being watched.

I saw Randy look back several times as if he was still trying to glimpse what it was that he was seeing from the corner of his eye. I decided that as long as it was on his mind I'd ask what he was seeing. He took a deep breath and began to explain.

"Now you guys are going to think I am nuts, but for the last few days, I have been seeing someone standing in that damn archway. I can see it clear as day in the corner of my eye, but when I turn to face it, it disappears. I can't describe it and it is driving me crazy."

Steve and I looked at him and then each other. Steve took a breath and then, as if he was confessing a horrid crime, he began to explain his experiences. The words came soft and fast and Randy and I had to strain to hear them, but we both understood.

"Yeah, I've seen the same thing. Something was standing there. I've also woken up at night because something touched me. Last night, I know something pulled my blankets back. I rolled over once and saw something move but there was nothing there. I was almost asleep again when my blanket came flying back. It was an eerie cold feeling. I could feel something in the room,

kind of an electric feeling. After a few minutes, it went away."

He looked at me and I just nodded my acceptance. I acknowledged that I had seen something but was unsure as to what it was. I wanted to keep my experiences to myself to see if anyone else was having the same thing happening to them, without a mental prod from me. So far, Steve and I were on the same playing field. Randy was visibly upset and I was sure that he also had experienced something similar. We talked about it for a few more minutes but no one had an idea of how to explain it so the subject dropped. The next night, however, it reopened.

I was supposed to have that night off, but I ended up subbing again at the other base. This time, I was working with Mike, the same guy I had subbed for the previous time. Obviously, his partner had brought him up to speed on the accident and he had a dozen questions. He was a morbid guy and a lot of guys didn't like working with him. I didn't mind because, deep down, I was a morbid kind of guy too. I answered all his questions, which mainly centered on how we got Ralph out of the car with his huge stature. He wanted all the gory details of the broken bones and such.

After he was sated with his gore fix, I began to tell him about our ghost problem. I went into every detail I knew without making too much of it up and as I suspected, he had a ton of questions. Had I been touched? Had I seen a face? What did it look like? I began to answer all his questions. No, I had not seen a face and I had not been touched, but I did have a sketchy idea of what it looked like. I guess I never put two and two together. Mike did.

I began to tell him that each time I saw it, I was sensing more and more definition. I wasn't seeing more definition; I was sensing it. I described a tall figure and I could tell it was forlorn, lost and dejected. In a way, I explained, I felt it wanted my comfort. Without missing a beat, Mike piped up and said, "Hell, that's an easy one, that's your Ralph guy." I sat in shock for a moment because I knew he was right. It all fit. It had to be Ralph. Mike continued to blath-

er on about his ghost theory, but I was putting the story together from the parts I had experienced. I couldn't wait to get home to talk with Steve.

The shift was over in another hour as the guy I was covering came back and I headed home. Randy and Steve were holding down the fort and TV was gone into the never-never land of early seventies late-night television. I walked in and Steve knew I had something on my mind. "What's up?" It was his signature line.

"Any of you had more thoughts on our favorite ghost lately?" Steve shook his head "no" but Randy had a sick look on his face. We both looked at him and he stumbled around for words. It took him several minutes to spit it all out, but when he was through, I was even more convinced that I was on the right track. Randy was certain that our spirit had tried to talk with him the night before. He couldn't remember words but he knew the message was not a good one. He was clearly afraid. Turns out he should have been.

We sat huddled in a circle in the living room as I explained Mike's theory and my refinements of the theory. Everyone felt that indeed it was quite possible that Ralph was our visitor. Steve and I were almost happy because we both were into that kind of thing, you know, scary shit. Randy was new to the business and had never even thought of ghosts and the lore that surrounds them. We thought it was funny that he was quite upset about the whole deal.

We talked another hour or so, discussing astral plane theories so Randy understood it. We discussed other ghosts we suspected had haunted us, but we never had any proof, at least not like we had proof with the Ralph deal, though. We decided on a plan of action to make our case. The next time one of us saw that out-of-the-corner-of-the-eye deal or was awakened in the night, we were going to greet him by name. Randy thought we were both bug-shit nuts, but Steve and I were all set for a fun time. If only we knew.

A Scream in the Night

As it happened, I was the first to actually make contact with Ralph. One late night as I was sleeping and awoke startled. I initially blamed it on the television, thinking Randy turned the volume up and someone on a late-night movie had screamed. I definitely remember the scream part. All of a sudden, Randy burst into my room asking if I was all right. I must have been confused because I asked who was making all the noise.

"You, dumb ass! You just screamed like Beelzebub himself had cornered you," Randy said. He started laughing when he saw how stupid I was acting.

It took several minutes for my heart rate to fall below 100 but my mind was already shutting down. There was very little illumination in the room but most of the details of the layout were visible after your eyes had become accustomed to the situation. I was almost back to sleep when I felt him. It was cold outside and my room was cool but I felt a distinct cold draft and a tingling sensation in the air. I tried not to move but slowly opened my eyes.

At first, I saw nothing. My mind was wide awake and I was doing one of those self tests to make sure I really was awake and not dreaming again. Next thing I knew, his tall figure was right in front of me. I didn't say anything because I wanted to get a good image of him. Then, it was as if he realized that I knew he was there and began to, for lack of a better description, fade away.

Fortunately, I had his name on the tip of my tongue and I spoke it. I was not nearly as assertive as I hoped to be, but at least I was audible. "Ralph, wait."

The figure stopped his fade and I distinctly saw his face come back into view. After all, I had spent a lot of time with him as he died; I surely recognized his face. He smiled at me briefly and made a motion as if to shake my hand. All verbal bravado aside, I was scared. He smiled again and by his look, I got the feeling he meant me no harm. I wasn't sure about that, but I hoped I was right.

"Why are you here Ralph?" I didn't expect an answer and I didn't get one. I saw him reach to his garment and he ran his hand down his rib cage as if he was stroking it. I remembered the terrible flail chest he had and it crossed my mind he was healing both mentally and physically. He lifted a pant leg to show me his ankle and I sensed he was showing me his wounds were healing. He

smiled at me once again and reached for my shoulder. This time, he made contact and was gone.

When I awoke the next morning, I had to search my mind to see if I had dreamed that or if I had actually lived through it. Randy wasted no time in asking if I remembered him waking me up after I had started screaming. "That must have been some dream man! You were screaming like a girl." I resisted the impulse to throw my cereal bowl at him because I wanted to think. Steve came out of the shower and joined us as we ate what passed for breakfast at the base.

"I talked to him last night," I announced just as I slid some Captain Crunch with Crunch Berries in my mouth. Both of them put their spoons down and waited for me to quit crunching my Crunch Berries. I went over the events as I recalled them. I asked them if they believed what I was telling them and munched on another spoon of Berries.

Steve nodded his agreement and between chews, he said he wondered if the reason we were seeing him was because we had been good to him as he was dying. We exchanged theories on that theme for a few minutes before we noticed Randy had not said anything since my announcement. In fact, Randy looked down right ill. Almost in unison, we asked him what was wrong. When he finished, we knew that if we truly believed this, Randy was in trouble.

Randy Loses the Game

We thought it was nuts to be even discussing a ghost back then. The average guy wouldn't even believe it happened, but it did.

Steve and I were both curious about Randy's obvious discomfort and we made him spell it out. It seems I forgot about the time Randy had spent at that scene. I guess I still don't remember having him sit with Ralph, but he says he did. He said that I stuck him there when we were moving one of the kids from the van that had a badly shattered set of hips. Who could have known that those few minutes could have gone so wrong?

Randy had only been an EMT for about six weeks and this had been his first really bad accident scene. Like I had told you before, sitting with a fellow human as he or she is slipping away is never easy and it takes a calmness that only comes from experience not to panic or say or do stupid things. Randy

had no experience. He was almost crying as he related back to the seven minutes he and Ralph had been together. He told us about checking out Ralph's injuries, at the expense of his pain.

He had never seen a bad flail chest (and Ralph had one of the most severe flail chest cases I had ever seen in ten years in the emergency field). His instructor had told him that they needed to touch and explore these types of injuries when they found them. Apparently he ran his hand up and down Ralph's chest and pressed against those smashed ribs to assess the damage. Ralph asked him to please not hurt him further and in apparent "new cowboy" style, Randy told him to shut up. You see a lot of that unfortunately. New medics, new nurses, and new doctors all have a bad case of "I am God, listen to me." Not all of them, but unfortunately, too many.

I suppose now that if Randy had stopped the exam right there, he might have lived but that's not what happened. Despite Ralph's objections and moans of pain, Randy went on to examine the broken bones in his legs and pelvis. I have never broken a bone in my life but I have seen a lot of them. I can only imagine what Ralph went through unnecessarily due to that exam.

Steve asked him why the hell he had done that. Randy hung his head, quite ashamed and afraid, and said he had been taught that severe trauma patients frequently don't really feel pain. Now that is true, but only to a point. I told him that it was plain to me that Ralph both felt the pain and was alert enough to talk to me about things he wanted related to his family. Steve pressed Randy again about why he had continued despite the pain of the patient and he said he thought the guy was dying anyway so why shouldn't he learn from him. We just stared at each other, disbelieving what we were hearing.

Steve asked Randy what Ralph had said to him and at first he only repeated that part about not doing it any more. "Then why are you afraid now?" I looked at him and waited for a sensible answer to an insensible act. Once again, Randy got quiet and couldn't look up. "He told me he would get even with me. I laughed at him and told him to shut up and die." A small tear formed in his eye.

He was only 19 and very inexperienced. I suppose it was my fault for leaving him there but I never would have guessed he would have been so insensitive. Being a para-

medic is kind of like being in a war. A good friend that I met as a medic worked his first two weeks after getting his certification with me and then quit. He couldn't handle the violence. He went on to become a cop which I thought was not a whole lot different, but he told me later it kept him from having to touch tore-up people. Whatever floats your boat, I guess.

Steve asked Randy about his dream and Randy told us it wasn't a dream, he had seen Ralph last night, too. Ralph had been angry although he had not spoken at all. Randy said he had sensed Ralph's great anger that day. He felt afraid and was more than happy when he left him alone.

We sat around the table for another hour or so, discussing the possibilities. We decided that Randy should apologize the very next time he saw him. Randy said he would do that but he wanted to go home to get a good night's sleep. He lived with his parents about 125 miles away when he didn't stay at the base. It was cold out, but the roads were clear and he decided he was going to head home right then. He grabbed a few things, filled out his last shift's paperwork and tossed his stuff into his Chevy truck.

Randy had been gone about ten minutes when our alerting system went off. We jumped into the rig and got directions to an accident out on the main highway. We pulled onto the scene about the same time as the county deputy did. Steve and I simultaneously realized that the truck against the tree was Randy's red Chevy. It only took about twenty seconds to determine that he was dead. We were devastated as we walked back to where the cop was talking to the sole witness. We stood nearby as he finished him and he walked over to us.

"Strange story there. He says it looked like the driver was fighting with someone as he went down the road. He said the truck kept jerking back and forth across the lane and suddenly accelerated, then just veered hard off the road into the tree. He swore there was a big fight going on in the truck." Steve and I were dumbfounded. The deputy looked at us. "You guys see a second guy in there?" We shook our heads. Only Randy saw what was going on and he was dead.

All Aboard!

For the next week, it was kind of quiet at our base. We had lost a comrade, but that wasn't the point. None of us had really got to know

Randy all that well because he was so new. What bothered Steve and I was the fact we knew what had happened and who the hell was going to listen to us when we began to blather about a ghost killing Randy? We didn't take it up with any of the other members of the service because we were already known as different.

As I remember, it was about three weeks before either of us had solid contact with Ralph again and once again, I was the lucky one. I had just bought a beautiful sky blue 1971 Olds Cutlass and I was driving it all over on my off time. I had just dropped off my girlfriend after a night at the movies and I was on my way home. I was tired but I remember being in a good mood and I was listening to an AM radio station out of Chicago when I met up with Ralph again.

Now if you drive a lot at night, you know that there are dark nights and then there are dark nights. I mean it is always dark at night but some nights you can see almost as well as you can during the day. Then there's the kind of night I was driving in: very dark, no moon and very hard to see even with high beams on. I was traveling alone down a road I had driven literally thousands of times since my youth. I was watchful of deer, as Michigan is full of those creatures. They might be beautiful but I have seen a lot of people seriously hurt after colliding with a deer.

Now this road was paved but for all practical purposes, it was very much a country road. It was your basic just-above-a-dirt-road road. I can't remember whom I was listening to when I had the crap scared out of me, but I'll remember forever that voice. Driving, listening to my tunes when out of nowhere, I hear a thunderous voice scream at me "STOP!" and I did.

I remember slamming on the brakes so hard that I took thousands of miles off my tires in about 12 seconds. I am not sure if it was because the voice scared me so badly or if I was just reacting to what it said, but either way, I came to a complete stop. For several seconds I didn't hear it. Then I became aware of a steady, rhythmic ka-thump ka-thump in the background. I reached over and turned down the radio and it still took about fifteen seconds before I recognized the sound. It was a train at an unmarked crossing. Typically this crossing would see trains with more than 100 to 130 cars.

This was a country road with no

train crossing lights and here I sat on a dark winter night, within forty feet of this train and it was all I could do to see it. I began to shake with the thought of what nearly happened and what had actually happened. An unseen rider, a ghost, someone had shouted out a warning at just the right time to save my new car and me. I knew it had to be Ralph.

I sat at the crossing for nearly a minute after the last car had cleared the road in front of me as I considered my situation. After all, Steve and I both knew Ralph had killed Randy, but had he in fact just saved me? Gradually, I was able to start for home again, but it was a slow trip. All the way, I kept glancing to my right to see if I had a passenger but I never saw one. Once back at the base, I woke Steve up and asked if we could talk in his room. The other crew was on duty and as I said, they all thought we were crazy anyway. I didn't need to be talking about ghosts in front of them.

I explained to Steve everything that had just happened and we both sat and thought about it. He asked if I had sensed him in the car and I told him I hadn't. I think I was too much involved in my thoughts of my girlfriend and my new car. To say the least, my attention had been diverted and my sensing radar was not up when Ralph shouted at me. After a few more minutes of discussion, we were both certain that it indeed had been Ralph and that while he had killed Randy it didn't seem he was out to hurt us. Until now I guess.

... to be continued in *Ogrishmag*
Issue 3...

Lethal Injection... Easy Way Out or Excruciating Silent Suffering?

By Jessie Hex

Most people consider lethal injection to be the most humane, peaceful form of execution. However, stories and research are coming to light that conflict with this long-held belief.

Lethal injection was introduced in 1977 (a year after the Supreme Court reinstated capital punishment). Mounting public interest in the possibility of televised executions forced lawmakers and corrections departments to devise an execution method that was calm and seemingly humane. Fast forward to 2005. All but one of 38 states with the death penalty use lethal injection for executions (Nebraska still uses the electric chair).

The actual process of lethal injection sounds to the average person like a painless procedure. First, a physician consults with the condemned and explains the procedure. He is given Valium, or Versed, if he chooses. This is done a few hours prior to the execution to ensure an anxiety-free mind. He is then led to the preparation area near the death chamber, and is laid on a gurney. The gurney has straps that are used to secure the defendant. Two IVs are inserted by qualified medical staff. One IV is placed in each arm, and a flow of saline solution is started in both IVs.

While that is taking place, a pharmacist prepares eight syringes, numbered one through eight. Syringes one and two contain sodium thiopental (with a dosage that is lethal in itself). Sodium thiopental is normally used as a surgical anesthetic. It takes effect in seconds. Syringe number three contains a saline solution that is used as a flushing agent. Syringes four and five contain a lethal dosage of Pancuronium bromide, which causes immediate paralysis. Syringe number six also contains a saline solution used for flushing. Syringes seven and eight contain potassium chloride, which stops the heart from beating.

The syringes, in numerical order, are inserted into a port in the IV tube and are administered one after the other in the order stated. Six people are present in the chamber in addition to the condemned.

Along with the executioner, there is a physician, a physician's assistant, and three others, usually security personnel. The doctor is there in case a situation arises that requires medical attention. The assistant is there to check for a pulse after the drugs have been administered.

The public is split between believing this procedure is a humane form of execution and believing that the condemned is consciously feeling pain as the administered drugs take effect. Those that believe this procedure is humane equate the feeling to falling asleep right before a surgical procedure. People in favor of the procedure argue that it is completely painless, and often times the easy way out, considering the pain and trauma the condemned afflicted on their victim(s) and victims' families and friends.

If you've ever had surgery under general anesthesia, you would know that within seconds of receiving the medication (sodium thiopental) via IV, you're completely unconscious. In fact, most people are told to count backwards from ten, and can barely make it to number seven. The time period that you're unconscious is completely forgotten, and you wake up afterward as though you've just awoke from a nap. You have no recollection of anything. When you take Versed or Valium, as the condemned are offered prior to the lethal injection to curb anxiety, you are completely at ease.

Typically the prisoner is completely unconscious within a minute of the sodium thiopental administration; dead in about eight minutes, with no obvious signs of physical suffering.

However, inmates in Kentucky will tell you a different story. Edward Lee Harper was executed by lethal injection in 1999. It took him 12 minutes to die. People witnessing the execution say that he looked completely tranquil as the series of medications were pumped into his veins. The next morning, as an autopsy was performed, the medical examiner measured the level of lethal injection chemicals in three different parts of his body. After seeing the levels, lawyers for two prisoners who were scheduled for exe-

cution said that Mr. Harper was tortured to death, not being able to move or speak, but fully capable of feeling the burning pain and suffocation from the chemicals.

In October of 2003, concerns started surfacing in the American appeals courts that the use of Pancuronium bromide (responsible for the paralyzing effect) could in fact mask the prisoner's pain should the sodium thiopental not completely knock him/her out.

Dr. Edward Brunner, chairman of the Department of Anesthesia at North-Western University Medical School, is also in agreement with the statement that lethal injection may not be painless. He submitted an affidavit on behalf of Illinois death row inmates stating that lethal injection "create(s) the substantial risk that prisoners will suffocate or suffer excruciating pain during the three chemical injections but will be prevented by the paralytic agent from communicating their distress."

Some experts say the debate over lethal injections misses a crucial point—some punishment is meant to be painful. "Is there something short of torture—a painful death—that can be acceptable morally and constitutional?" asked Robert Blecker, a professor at New York Law School. "My answer is yes. Where the condemned has intentionally inflicted pain, the condemned deserves a quick but painful death."

It's pretty fair to say that the lethal injection process looks humane when compared to the other methods of execution. If everything goes as scheduled, the pain that the prisoner would suffer would be limited to the insertion of the IVs.

At this time, no one can say whether lethal injection is an easy way out or an excruciating silent torture.

Electrician Electrocution



THIS MAN WAS
ELECTROCUTED
WHILE WORKING
ON A ROUTINE TEL-
EVISION INSTALLA-
TION.



Decomposing War Dead



A MEMBER OF THE CANADIAN ARMY DISPLAYS THE DECOMPOSING BODY OF A BOSNIAN WAR VICTIM.



Plane Plunges into Market



IN 1996 AN OVERLOADED RUSSIAN AIRPLANE WAS UNABLE TO TAKE OFF FROM AN AIRPORT IN THE CONGO AND CRASHED INTO A LOCAL MARKET AT THE END OF THE RUNWAY KILLING APPROXIMATELY 600 PEOPLE.





Polish Train Hits Woman Head-on

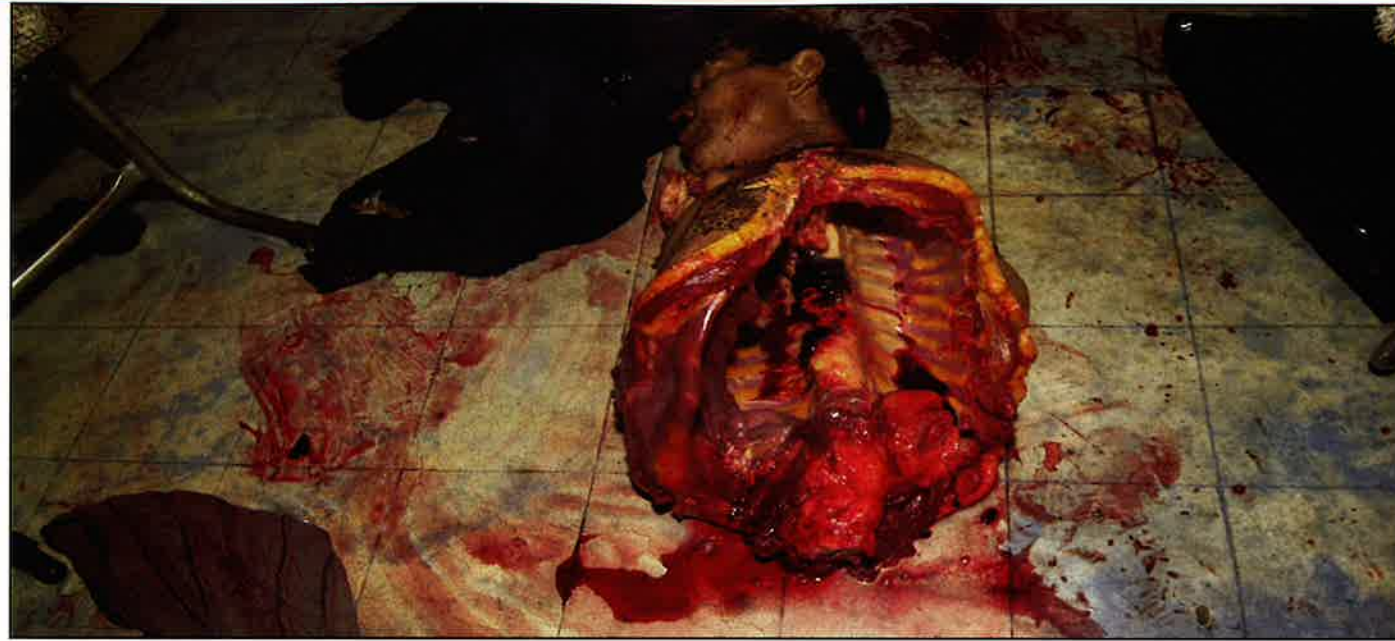


A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN FAILED TO CROSS TRAIN TRACKS IN TIME AND WAS HIT HEAD-ON BY AN ONCOMING TRAIN.





Soylent Green Tamales



TAMALES—A MEXICAN FOOD MADE FROM CORN FLOUR, A LITTLE BIT OF CHILE AND, USUALLY, PORK MEAT. HOWEVER, IN A QUIET SUBURBAN MEXICAN TOWN, A MAN INCLUDED A SPECIAL SECRET INGREDIENT: PEOPLE.

MEXICO'S CANNIBAL CHEF IS BELIEVED TO HAVE KILLED—AND COOKED INTO HIS TAMALES—AT LEAST FOUR PEOPLE.



Victims of Mexico's Heroin Killer



AN AS-YET-UNIDENTIFIED MEXICAN SERIAL KILLER HAS MURDERED AT LEAST TWO PEOPLE BY ADMINISTERING AN OVERDOSE OF HEROIN. THE BODIES OF THE VICTIMS—AGED 15-18—WERE FOUND DUMPED IN A WELL.



Dominican Republic Car Crash

THIS CAR ACCIDENT OCCURRED JANUARY 2004 ON A DARK HIGHWAY IN SANTO DOMINGO, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC.



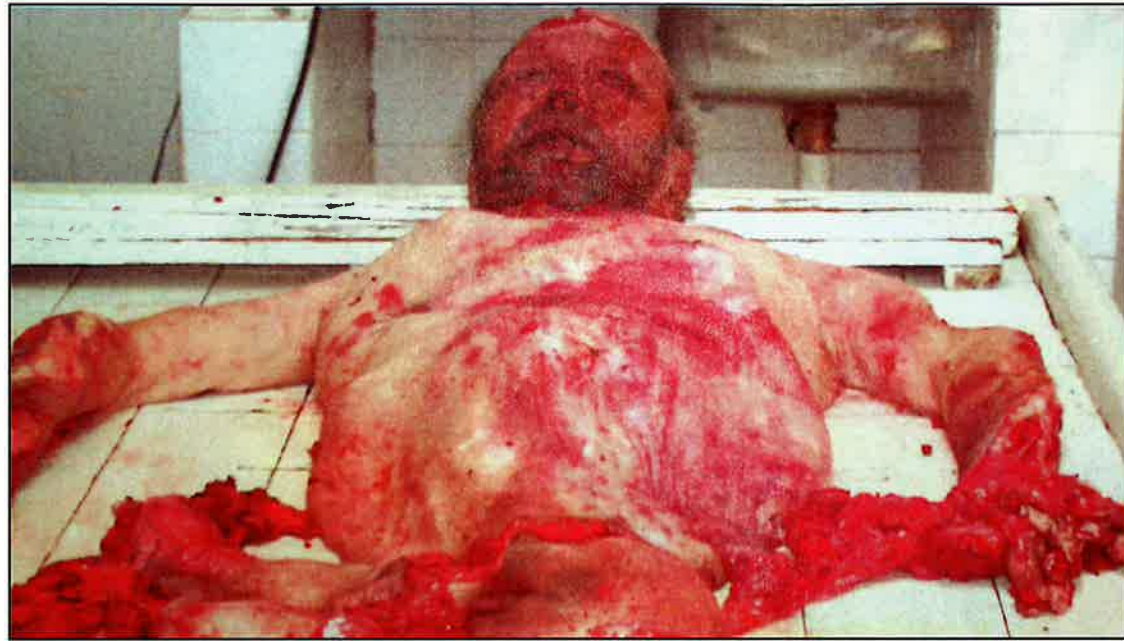
Trapped Under a Train in Prague



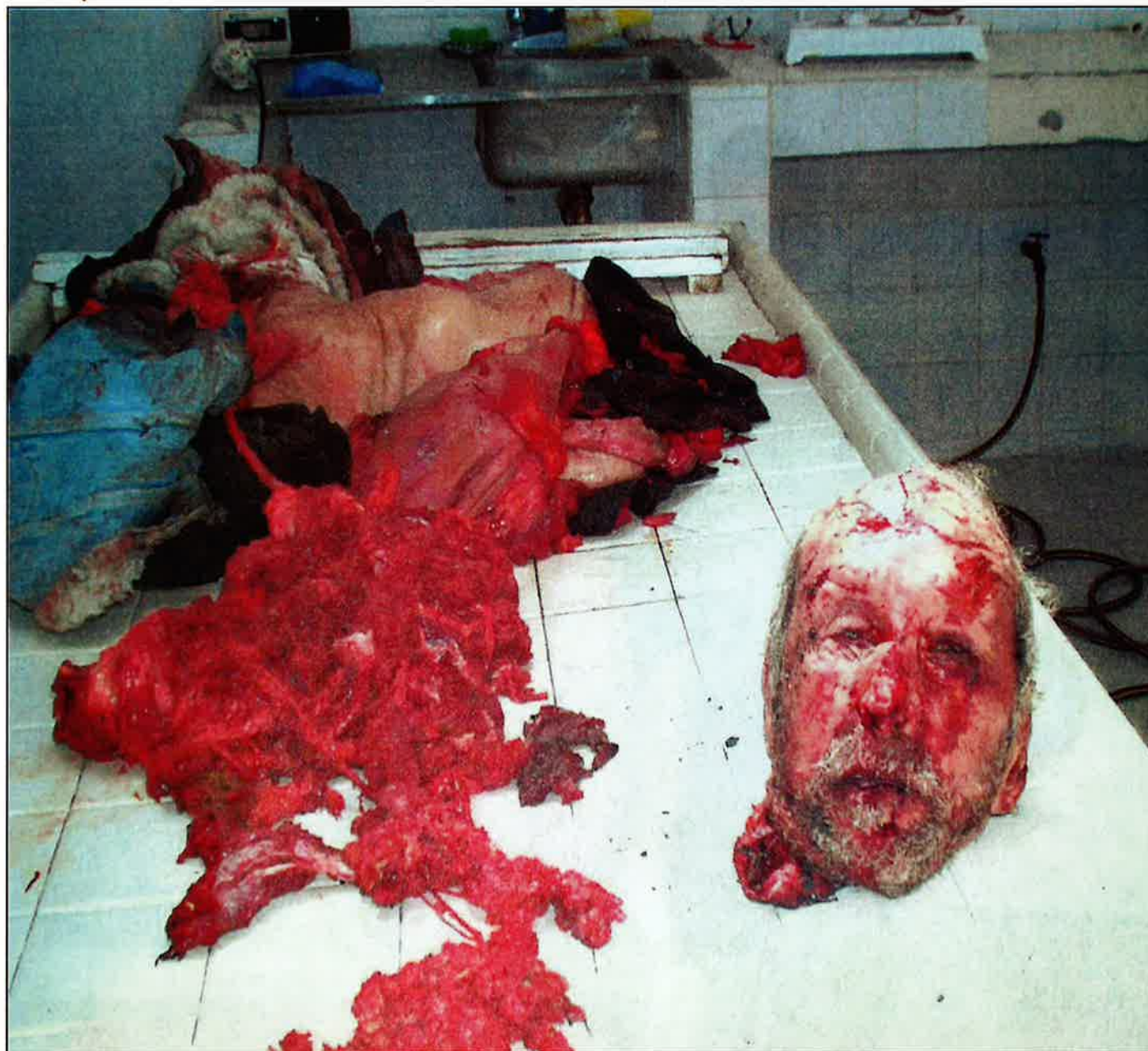
A 16-YEAR-OLD GIRL DIED WHILE CLIMBING BETWEEN CARS OF A TRAM IN PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC, WHILE HER FRIEND WATCHED HELPLESSLY.



Butchered Butcher



A SOUTH AMERICAN BUTCHER WAS KILLED WITH HIS OWN KNIVES BY HIS WIFE FOR FINANCIAL REASONS. HIS WIFE—AN EXOTIC DANCER—WAS SENTENCED TO 67 YEARS IN JAIL.



Immigrant Dismemberment by Train



THREE DIFFERENT SCENES OF DISMEMBERED ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS WHO TRIED TO JUMP ON A TRAIN GOING TO MEXICO. THESE SCENES ARE COMMON IN MEXICO DUE TO THE HIGH VOLUME OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION.

